

Post Independent



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GLENWOOD SPRINGS, COLORADO

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Undefeated — bring on the PLAYOFFS!



Post Independent/KARA K. PEARSON

STILL STANDING: Glenwood's Jordan Ciani tries to avoid tackles by Delta defenders during Friday night's home game, which was also the last game of the regular season. The Demons fought hard to keep their season undefeated, making a comeback in the second half to win, 34-20. See **PAGE A14** for related story.

Rippy avoids jail time with plea deal

Vehicular homicide, DUI
dropped in plea agreement

BY PETE FOWLER
Post Independent Staff

Harley "Dow" Rippy was not drinking at a wedding before driving his Jeep in a ride that resulted in his friend's death, according to Rippy's attorney.

Denver-based attorney Dan Recht said Rippy is scheduled to plead guilty Thursday to careless driving resulting in death with an agreement for no jail or prison. Rippy signed a plea agreement in which a vehicular homicide charge was dropped, he added.

"It's a big victory for him," Recht said. "He was charged with a very serious felony and now he's pleading to a very serious traffic offense. ... The whole thing

has been devastating to him because Tim died, and Tim was a friend."

Authorities accused Rippy, 50 at the time, of driving his 2006 Jeep Wrangler drunk off County Road 344 about 14 miles south of Silt around 1 a.m. on Aug. 20, 2006. The Jeep went off the left side of the road, continued down an embankment and rolled onto its side. Timothy Curtiss, 41, was partially ejected from the back seat as the Jeep rolled. He was pinned beneath it and pronounced dead at the scene, authorities said. Rippy was arrested on suspicion of DUI and vehicular homicide.

But Recht said people at the Rippy family wedding would testify that Rippy was sober and hadn't been drinking when he drove people back to the house from a knoll where the wedding and reception were held a half-mile away.

RIPPY: see page A7

Friends support Rippy's defense

RIPPY: from page A1

Curtiss was drunk, standing in the back of the Jeep and shaking the roll bar, Recht said, which caused Rippy to drive off the road. After the accident, Rippy walked to his nearby home and called authorities. It wasn't until then that Rippy had a glass of gin, Recht said.

Deputy District Attorney Amy Fitch said, "That's the defense theory of what happened and there's really no evidence to prove otherwise."

She said there was a blood draw from about three hours after the accident proving Rippy was intoxicated, but it didn't prove he was intoxicated at the time of

the accident. Investigators speaking with as many people as they could find who attended the wedding also didn't produce anyone who said Rippy was intoxicated at the wedding, Fitch added. She wouldn't disclose Rippy's blood-alcohol content.

Fitch noted there were also some viable suppression of evidence issues that came up in a previous hearing, and said Curtiss' family didn't want a harsh punishment.

"His parents said, 'Dow was a friend of our son and therefore he was a friend of our family, and we don't want anything bad to happen to him,'" Fitch said.

Recht said Rippy didn't wish to comment at this time.

Bair wants more Hispanic students

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"We have about a 25 percent Hispanic population," Bair said. "I went out and made a huge effort to see what we could do in order to get that representation at the school."

The year before, only 10 of the 80 students at Bridges were Hispanic and that was something that she wanted to change. But the alternative high school has a unique self-paced system where the students can, and are encouraged to learn at their own pace. But it can be difficult for a student who has just moved to the valley from another country, with limited

English capabilities.

"How frightening it must be to be in an environment that you don't understand and then be required to learn," Bair said. "That is a problem for me."

Bair said that traveling to other countries and understanding how the education system works and being open-minded about teaching in a way that students are familiar with is something that districts like the Roaring Fork School District need to do today.

"Things change so fast that if we don't keep up we won't be able to provide the high level of education that the kids need," Bair said.



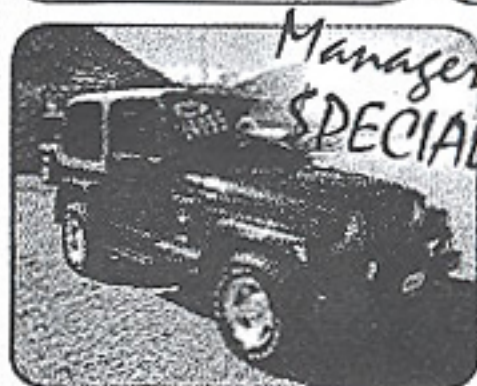
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